

# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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May 26, 2017

Spanish version: [www.alianzadejubilados.org](http://www.alianzadejubilados.org)

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## 2018 Budget Blueprint Slashes Social Security and Medicaid, Breaks Campaign Promises

The White House released its budget blueprint for 2018 on Tuesday, and it received a chilly reception for many reasons, including its betrayal of retirees. Despite President **Trump's** campaign pledge not to cut Social Security, the budget [slashes](#) Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) by \$72 billion over 10 years. The cut weakens the earned benefits that millions have paid for during decades of work; disability insurance provides benefits to those who are injured on the job or are otherwise disabled.

The budget targets other [programs](#) that assist older Americans. In addition to moving ahead with the \$800 billion in Medicaid cuts included in the House-passed American Health Care Act (AHCA), the budget proposes an additional \$600 billion in Medicaid cuts, for a total of \$1.4 trillion. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) had already estimated that the Trumpcare bill could end Medicaid's health care and long term care benefits for about 10 million people – including millions of seniors, the disabled, veterans and children. The 2018 budget will affect even more.

The plan decimates the Community Development Block Grant, which provides funding to states and communities to fund home-delivered meals for home-bound seniors through organizations such as Meals on Wheels. Trump's proposal would also cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by more than 25 percent, taking benefits away from the 45 million citizens, especially seniors, who need basic nutrition.

All of that is in addition to slashing the earned [pension](#) benefits of current and future federal workers.

"This budget is an attack on seniors' health and economic security," said **Robert Roach Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Seniors are being sold out for tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires. We will not stand for it, and we will work tirelessly to see that it never sees the light of day."

"At a time when 10,000 Americans are turning 65 every day, slashing Medicaid funds for elderly health care is wrong-headed and cruel," added **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

## CBO Confirms Trump's Health Care Bill Would Drastically Harm Older Americans

The Congressional Budget Office released its score of the AHCA on Wednesday, and it showed that President Trump and Speaker **Paul Ryan** are taking affordable health insurance coverage away from [23 million Americans](#).

Health care premiums would rise dramatically for those with pre-existing conditions, according to the CBO. Among people ages 55 to 64, [84 percent](#) had at least one pre-existing condition in 2014.

Premium increases are going to be massive for this group, which includes millions of older Americans, and that will destabilize the health care markets.

“We now know why the House leadership was in such a hurry to pass this dreadful legislation without a single hearing: this bill is both dangerous and unfair,” said Mr. Fiesta.

The AHCA decimates Medicaid with its more than \$800 billion in cuts, and the outlook isn't much better for those who qualify for Medicare, since the bill robs the Medicare Trust Fund to provide unneeded tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires.

The CBO confirms some states will drop the coverage guarantee for people with pre-existing conditions, making health insurance a privilege for the healthy and wealthy, not a right for all. Conservative House Freedom Caucus Chairman **Mark Meadows** (R-NC), a vocal supporter of the bill, seemed [surprised](#) and began to lose his composure when reporters pointed out that individuals with pre-existing conditions in some states would be charged drastically higher premiums under the AHCA and many would be unable to afford insurance at all

“The CBO numbers confirm that Trumpcare is a danger to the health of all Americans, but especially to older Americans,” said President Roach.



Texas Alliance (TARA) member George Nolan, President of the Dallas Chapter, protests the AHCA with other activists outside Rep. Jeb Hensarling's office in Dallas. TARA President Gene Lantz is in background.

The future of the health care bill is in doubt in the Senate, where many Republican senators have distanced themselves from the House's version. A select committee of all male GOP senators is developing a health care proposal behind closed doors.

"Members of the Alliance for Retired Americans are mobilized and ready to fight tooth and nail against the AHCA in the Senate," said Mr. Fiesta.

### **Medicaid Fight in Senate Divides GOP**

Medicaid has become an especially divisive part of the [Senate](#) health care debate. Trump's 2018 budget plan incorporates provisions in the House bill that would cap Medicaid's funding for the first time, shifting it to a system that awards fixed amounts to states to help run their programs. But the White House is also adding a stricter limit on how fast that funding can grow over time.

Several Republican senators, including **Shelley Moore Capito** of West Virginia, **Rob Portman** of Ohio, and **Bill Cassidy** from Louisiana, come from states whose constituents have benefited immensely from the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Any repeal of the ACA in the Senate may depend on Medicaid funding and the senators from these states.

"If members of Congress allow ideology to cut vital services, their own constituents will be the ones paying the costs," said **Joseph Peters Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

### **Coalition of Black Trade Unionists Hear from Executive Director Fiesta**

Mr. Fiesta addressed an energized crowd of Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) members in New Orleans on Wednesday this week. **Linda Chavez-Thompson**, former Executive Vice-President of the AFL-CIO, was also among the speakers, and several Alliance members attended.



Photo from the CBTU convention in New Orleans this week

## Did You Know...

The CBO's analysis of subsidies in 2026 indicates that net premiums for a 64-year-old earning \$26,500 would rise from \$1,700 to between \$13,600 and \$16,100 under the AHCA, depending on whether the person lives in a state requesting waivers for market regulations. (Source: [NPR](#))

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The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.4 million retirees and their families.